

REMARKS

By the foregoing Amendment, Claim 15 has been amended. Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Claims 15-21 and 23-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 (a) on the grounds of obviousness from Viera in view of Frechette et al. The Examiner indicated that it could be said that the distal region of the reinforcement tube of Viera extends over a portion of the distal region of the core, since "no special definition is set forth for the term 'distal region.'" Claim 15 has now been amended to recite "said core having ... an intermediate tapered region between said proximal and distal regions," and "a coating of a heat shrinkable material disposed over said distal tapered portion of said reinforcement tube and said intermediate tapered region of said elongated, flexible core." The Examiner indicated that although the Viera patent shows the sleeve 340 extending over the proximal segment 322 of the core wire 320, there is nothing in the Viera patent that states that the sleeve is limited to only the proximal segment of the core wire. However, at column 4, lines 9-13, Viera discloses that the sleeve 340 is generally cylindrical in shape and sized to snugly fit over the outer surface of proximal segment 322 and surround at least a portion of proximal segment 322. This passage elucidates in more detail the description at column 2, lines 44-46 of the sleeve 340 surrounding at least a portion of the corewire 320 to which the Examiner referred. The sleeve 340 is described as generally cylindrical and snugly fitting over the outer surface of the proximal segment 322, but there is no teaching, disclosure or suggestion in Viera of the sleeve 340 including a distal

tapered portion extending over an intermediate tapered region of the corewire, as is claimed. Further, if the distal tapered portion of the sleeve 340 were to extend over the intermediate tapered portions 324 and 328, flexing of the tapered portions could be expected to cause the tapered portion of the reinforcement tube to flare outwardly, and to separate from the guidewire core. Claim 15 recites "a coating of a heat shrinkable material disposed over said distal tapered portion of said reinforcement tube and said intermediate tapered region of said elongated, flexible core," which functions to retain the thinly tapered portion of the reinforcement tube of the invention to the surface of the distal region of the guidewire core and prevent separation of the tapered portion of the reinforcement tube from the distal region of the guidewire core. Viera does not teach, disclose or suggest this.

Frechette et al. was cited as disclosing a coating of heat shrinkable material to ensure that a coiled section does not separate from the core wire, and that the coating extends over a substantial portion of the core wire, including a distal region thereof as illustrated in Fig. 1 of Frechette et al. The Examiner suggested that the heat shrinkable sleeve 54 of Frechette et al. could be disposed over a portion of the core wire that bears a distal portion of the reinforcement tube, but Viera and Frechette et al. do not teach, disclose or suggest this. The Examiner indicated that Frechette et al. teaches placement of a heat shrinkable sleeve 54 to solve a problem of it preventing the coil from separating from the core wire, which the Examiner indicated was similar to the problem of flaring of a reinforcement tube over a tapered portion of a core wire due to flexing of the tapered portion of the core wire. However, separation of the coil can occur independently of

flaring of a reinforcement tube or sleeve, and Frechette et al. does not teach, disclose or suggest extending a reinforcement tube over a proximal region of a core and distally tapering a portion of the reinforcement tube over a distal tapered portion of the core.

Viera also does not teach this. It follows that it would not be have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art from Viera and Frechette et al. to extend a coating of a heat shrinkable material disposed over a distal tapered portion of a reinforcement tube and an intermediate tapered region of the elongated, flexible core, as is claimed.

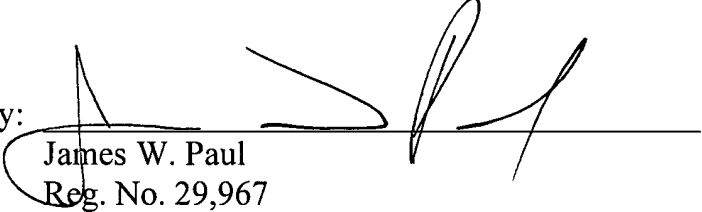
It is thus respectfully submitted that Viera and Frechette et al., either individually or in combination, do not disclose, teach or suggest the present invention as claimed, and that the present invention is novel and inventive over the references cited, and that the rejection of Claims 15-21 and 23-26 on the grounds of obviousness from Viera in view of Frechette et al should be withdrawn.

In light of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application should now be in condition for allowance, and an early favorable action in this regard is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

FULWIDER PATTON LEE & UTECHT, LLP

By:


James W. Paul
Reg. No. 29,967

JWP/rvw

Encls.:Return Postcard

Howard Hughes Center
6060 Center Drive, Tenth Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90045
Telephone: (310) 824-5555
Facsimile: (310) 824-9696
Customer No. 24201